



Bed

Introduction

“Bed” is a very useful cue for us to teach our puppies as it can be used to our advantage during the foster puppy phase and will also be used in their working careers.

The “bed” does not have to be an actual dog bed, it can be a towel or a mat, or anything else that creates a clear distinction from its surroundings (pattern and/or texture change) to indicate that this is the spot you want your puppy to go to.

Once we have fully trained the cue “Bed” it means that your puppy will go the location you have trained from a distance, lie down, and remain in position until you release them with “Free”. However, this is a lot for a young puppy to process at once, so we will break things down and teach the behavior response to the cue gradually.

Teaching Your Puppy Bed

To prepare, place your “bed” in a quiet, low distraction place in your home and have plenty of treats to hand. You may want to have your puppy on leash to begin with even though you are working indoors.

Before you start teaching your puppy “Bed”, they should be able to easily go into a down position using a food lure.

- ☐ Stage 1 - Have a piece of kibble in your hand and take your puppy to the bed. When they step on the bed, use the food lure to encourage them into a down position. As soon as their elbows hit the bed, mark with “Yes!” and reward on the bed. Release them with “Free”. Repeat this a few times in each training session for a few days.

At this stage we are not using the verbal cue as our puppy has no idea what “Bed” means!

- ☐ Stage 2 - Once your puppy is getting the idea that they lie down on the bed, you can start adding the cue “Bed” as you take them there. As soon as they go into a down position, mark with “Yes!” and reward on the bed. Release them with “Free”. Repeat this a few times in each training session for a few days.
- ☐ Stage 3 - Once your puppy is going into a down position on the bed four out of five times that you give the verbal cue, then we can start to eliminate the food lure and wait until your puppy is in the down position on the bed before rewarding. Repeat a few times in each training session for a few days until your puppy will lie down on the bed when you cue “Bed,” without a food lure, four out of five times that you ask.
- ☐ Stage 4 - Now we are going to start building some duration. Give your puppy the cue “Bed.” As soon as they are in a down position on the bed, mark with “Yes!” but hold off a few seconds before giving the food reward. The reward your puppy in the bed and release them. You can gradually build the duration that they remain on the bed in the same way that we did for “Sit” and “Down.”

When Bed is Useful

Bed is a useful tool to have any time that you want your puppy to be out of the way but do not necessarily need them to be in their kennel. For example:

- 🐾 While you are preparing or eating meals.
- 🐾 While you open the door to guests.
- 🐾 While you need to focus on a task that does not involve your puppy, such as doing the dishes.
- 🐾 To give your puppy some chilling out time if they are showing signs of excitement or anxiety. Bed gives them a chance to regulate their emotions and gain impulse control.
- 🐾 In public or new environments such as in church, at a restaurant, at work, or at a doctor’s office. Taking your puppy’s bed (which is why it is good to use a smaller item such as a mat or a towel) to a new place can give them a sense of security and a familiar spot for them to relax.

Setting Up for Success

- 🐾 Make sure your puppy is able to go into the down position using a food lure before you start teaching them “Bed.”

- 🐾 To begin with, train in a quiet, low distraction part of your home and train in the same place each time. You can move to different locations and more distracting environments later.
- 🐾 To build bed duration, follow the same process as for building sit and down duration and adding other variables.

Other Resources

Article - Building Sit & Down Duration

Article - Building Sit & Down Duration - Adding Distance

Article - Building Sit & Down Duration - Adding Distractions

Article - Building Sit & Down Duration - Combining Variables

Article - Variables and the 3D's.